THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) The Government have laid down guidelines for selection of retail outlet dealers/LPG distributors/SKO-LDO dealers all over the country including Tamil Nadu. Under the guidelines, locations included in the RO/LPG/SKO-LDO. Marketing Plans are advertised and selection is made through the Dealer Selection Boards (DSBs) as per the prescribed procedure. It generally takes 6—12 months for commissioning the dealerships/distributorships from the date of interview.

(b) 21 retail outlet dealerships and 43 LPG distributorships have been allotted in the State of Tamil Nadu during the period 1999-2000 and February, 2001.

(c) and (d) Complaints against selection of dealers received have all been forwarded to the concerned oil marketing company for action as per the guidelines issued.

(e) Yes, Sir.

Tenders for Exploration of Oil

†279. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work for exploration of oil has started in the segments over recently;

(b) if so, by when this work will be completed; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for inviting tenders for the remaining for exploration of oil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Government has awarded 23 blocks for exploration of oil and gas in June, 2001. Production Sharing Contracts for these 23 blocks were signed on 17.07.2001. The

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

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Exploration work programmes under these contracts are divided into one to three exploration phases over a period of 7-8 years.

(c) The activities for accelerating exploration in the country, involving acquisition of new data, reprocessing/reinterpretation of existing data and offer of blocks form a continuous an ongoing process. Already two rounds of bidding have been completed under the New Exploration Licensing Policy.

Functioning of Field Officers

280. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that different oil and diesel companies depute their sales field officers to check malpractices in the Petrol Pumps/Retail outlet through out the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the reports submitted by these officers against any retail outlet are not being scrutinized and not Substantiated at the high level in the respective oil companies and the arbitrary reports submitted by these officers are treated as final;

(c) whether this results in tantamount to harassments and denial of social justice; and

(d) the details of steps taken to remove these anomalies in the system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The inspection reports of the Field Officers are scrutinised at the designated levels in the respective oil companies. Whenever, any irregularity/malpractice is detected during the inspection by Field Officer, a show cause notice as per Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 2001, issued by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, is issued to the Dealer allowing him to explain. Further action is taken after reviewing the explanation as per the guidelines.